/The Tibetans/

*563 [197] [177] [648] [181] race, the Hsi-fans of the country west of T'ao-chao speak the Tibetan language and are as much Tibetans as the inhabitants of any other portion of the Tibetan plateau. They come into contact with the Koko Nor Mongols farther north, whom they bully and plunder. Unlike the Mongols, who are being pushed back everywhere along the northern borders of China by Chinese agriculturalists, the Tibetans of the Kansu border hold their own against the Chinese colonists. The northeastern Tibetans are truculent and independent as compared to the Mongols, and they take readily and successfully to farming.

[142] [291] [177] [516] [181] There appear to be two physical types in Tibet, the short, round-faced Mongoloid type, and the tall Aryan type with prominent features. The latter type is common among the Tibetans of Amdo. The eastern Tibetan, even though he is in Chinese dress, may be readily recognized by his peculiar habit of standing with his feet turned out at right angles to his body.

On the whole, these people are hardy, independent, and cautious with strangers, but they are also notably hospitable.

2. Patterns of living

*563 342 a. Dwelling

Like all nomads, the Tibetans have no fixed homes. They live in rectangular tents usually made of yak hair instead of felt, with wooden framework. The bottoms of the tents are made fast with iron pins or animal horns. Mud, stone or dry dung is built up around the tent to keep off wind and snow.

*563 342 352 353 The interior arrangement varies little from tent to tent. A mud stove is in the middle, a Buddha image at the left side. On wooden shelves along the walls are chests and boxes where food and clothing are stored. Skin bags of butter, tsamba or flour, and saddles and rifles also hang along the walls. Shelves on the right side hold pans, water buckets, kettles, bowls, cups, a stone mill and a few skin bags. Near the door there is usually a [237] [372] heap of dried ox dung for fuel.

b. Food

*563 262 [241] [489] Farm products do not grow in the cold climate and high altitude, and transportation is difficult. Thus there is little variety in foodstuffs, and eating and drinking are simple functions. The daily fare is beef, mutton and other domestic meats, fresh and sour milk, butter, cheese, noodles, tsamba (parched barley meal) and tea.

*563 • 264 [262] There are no regular meal times in most households. In winter when the days are short, they may eat three meals a day; in spring and summer, perhaps four or five. During the day they eat tsamba and sour milk. The evening meal is noodles with boiled beef or mutton, though the poor can have noodles and beef less often.

Rich and poor eat with their hands, though the Tu-kung (chief

*563 or leader families) use chopsticks at festivals. Everyone has
• 264 his own bowl and carries it with him, even when invited to another home for dinner.

*563 Ordinary people do not often have guests for dinner, and a
504 feast can be afforded only by the family of a T'u-kung. The for-
262 mal dinner, which resembles that of the Chinese, is long and
184 ample. When the guests arrive they are served milk-tea, then
556 given chopsticks and a knife. The courses include rice, sweet cake (made of rice flour and dried fruit) sprinkled with sugar and butter, patties made of chopped mutton and intestine. There are small plates of green onions, vinegar and soy sauce for seasoning. The last course is beef soup or mutton with chopped potatoes, rice noodles and vegetables. Sour milk may be substituted for the soup in hot weather.

[252] Among the poor, the main meat dish for entertaining is a sheep's head boiled in salted water.

*563 c. Clothing
291 Tibetans wear the same sheepskin robe the year around. A man's robe ends just above his knees; a woman's reaches the
[556] ankles. Wealthy people may have silk or cotton robes lined with sheepskin. The less wealthy may decorate their robes with red or blue cotton trim or leopard-skin collars. The poor dispense with decoration. The robe is often worn with the left arm and shoulder exposed and the sleeve dangling, and in hot weather, the wearer may strip to the waist leaving both sleeves dangling. Women often strip in this manner while they work, and only in cold weather do they keep both arms in their sleeves. As they habitually wipe their hands on their robes, they are as a rule thoroughly dirty.

[556] No one wears stockings. The wealthy have long leather boots trimmed with black, red or green. Most common people go barefooted in summer, and wear sheepskin or felt boots in winter. All wear felt hats or caps in winter.

[793] The dress of the lama differs from that of a commoner. The robe is crimson, reaches to the ankles and has no sleeves. Not even in the coldest weather is the monk permitted to wear sleeves.

*563 Most of the men simply shave their heads, but a few leave a
302 round spot of hair on top. Women's hair styles are elaborate.
[184] The farther one goes into the nomadic area, the simpler the way of life he finds, and so also the feminine hair styles. Women in Labrang select a small amount of hair on the top of the head to make a braid which hangs down the back. The rest of the hair is made into a number of tiny braids which hang all around. A soft red board reaching to the ankles is attached to the hair, and the whole is heavily ornamented. This is the Tibetan woman's hairdress which is commonly seen.

574 good thing, control themselves masterfully, - as long as they did not go to sleep? The fan tai once gave a large, solemn dinner. He was the treasurer of the province of Kansu, the official just below the viceroy who at that time also controlled the foreign office of the
574 province. Before we sat down to dinner I was asked for my "expert"
411 opinion on the latest invention of His Excellency. The provincial treasurer also had charge of the equipment of the army and the arsenal of Lanchow. He had now made a new kind of "three-man-rifle," a large muzzle loader which two soldiers had to lay across their shoulders while a third aimed and pulled the trigger. Amazed at such "cleverness" which had already resulted in a few hundred of this model, "Lanchow 1905," being ordered from the government arsenal, I silently espoused His Excellency's cause, and in token of his gratitude for my suggestion that it might be better to use steel instead of Shansi iron at a somewhat exposed place, I was presented with a photograph of the inventor. /154/

000 At the feast itself there was also a Japanese present, who made himself out to be an officer and who was on his way back from Turkistan. He appeared in European dress but his hair which was longish in the middle but shaved on the sides and in front, showed plainly that as a rule he preferred to appear incognito as a Chinese or a Mongol and wear a queue, because the hair that had been left was just long enough so that a queue could be tied to it. He was, as he repeatedly assured us, on a purely scientific journey and had set out only to look for the se bu siang, the "four-not-equal" (1)

[136] 1. Elaphurus Davidianus, Chinese: se bu siang, was first discovered by Armand David in the imperial game park at Peking. The strange, stag-like animal was named "four-not-equal" by the Chinese because it was said to have the antlers of a stag, the feet of an ox, the tail of a donkey, and the hair of a mule. The species is today regarded as extinct. The game park as such has not existed since 1900.

which in his opinion still exists in the mountains on the Russian border. He said he had not been able to get it only because of the hostile entanglements of his country with Russia!

● 264 At this dinner we sat in an airy, half-open but very pretty
351 wooden pavilion in the fan tai's large garden in which there were lakes with many bridges and small boats between reed and bamboo

shrubs. It was too bad that at the time of my visit the water was completely covered with a thick crust of ice. But we foreigners were very much surprised to find such an idyllically quiet and beautiful spot in the middle of this crowded, noisy city, and I was told that this garden had been built more than 100 years ago. We sat in it for three hours, wrapped in our winter overcoats, ten of us around a large round table, and were served countless dishes. The dishes stood on the table for only a few minutes and always only one at a time, otherwise they would have turned ice-cold. With each new course everyone dipped into the common pot in the middle of the table with his chopsticks which, according to custom, he had first licked clean, then rummaged around in it like all the others to find a nice piece which he placed on the little porcelain spoon of his neighbor, amid many compliments, as well as on the little silver plate the size of a dollar, which even at the most luxurious feasts in China takes the place of our plate. Meanwhile, the icy cold caused one's fingers to grow stiff and made it more difficult to manipulate the thin chopsticks. There were two open pans filled with coals beside the table, over which one could warm one's hands, but soon the Chinese as well as the Europeans timidly drew their hands into the fur sleeves of their winter clothes and even the best eaters let the dishes pass in review, most of which were good only on the surface and underneath consisted of less tasty filling, for example a thick raw turnip and such things. Conversation and drinking became the main thing toward the end and, as usual at such dinners, everyone was still waiting for the rice. A Chinese dinner consists only of hors d'oeuvres, so to speak. The main food, even at the largest feasts, even when a dinner takes three hours to serve, consists of steamed rice which is offered at the very end. Each guest is given a few bowls full of this and after that he immediately departs. /155/ 264 [351]

Once when I asked the fan tai how it happened that Tung fu hsiang could still keep so many soldiers for himself, he immediately denied this fact and answered: "Tung fu hsiang is dead, he is positively dead!" And the Mohammedans in Da miao and the mandarin in Tsing yüan were all said to have lied. An official in the foreign office told me later that the Tsing yüan hsien should have known that under no circumstances must it be admitted that Tung fu hsiang still has soldiers; his confirming it could cost him his position if I reported him. 000

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782 he purified the animal. Then the horns and ears were sprinkled with water until the animal shook itself, a sign that the gods accepted it as a sacrifice. Then it was handed over to the Mohammedans. To complete the offering, the Fan tse Me threw clotted scraps of blood into the air with the ladle when the animal was being dismembered. If I had not had any Mohammedans with me, the men from Kue de would have killed the animal according to the Tibetan custom, they would have slowly strangled it with a rope pulled over its nostrils. When the animal was cut up, it did not take long before the sacrificial lamb was converted into blood sausages and sausages for frying.

782 264 It was dark when the meal was served. A ewer of horse-milk brandy had been bought in the neighboring yurt for the occasion. The sky had become more and more overcast, there was only a little light from the resinous cedar wood, and in numerous tents and yurts in the valley friendly fires beckoned. When we had dined Tsch'eng got up and gave a speech, using many high-flown words and similes, and saying that Sung had now paid his wether and that now no one could accuse him of having infected us with his disease up in the highlands. Then the men sang their melodious songs into the night. 782 539 They sang melancholy Mongolian songs and light Tibetan couplets:

"Alachimo! Maiden!
Like a chain of gold stretched across a river from yonder shore,
Like a chain of gold stretched across a river from the hither side,
Like a bridge with golden arches, heaven has united us with cords of gold," (1)

1. In the dialect of the Koko Nor Tibetans:
Tschü par re sege re
Tso tschü re sege re
Sang song be re se sa tsu tsa re
Li dyen dyi sege tenn da re.

or, a song teasing his beloved:

"Alachimo! Maiden!
I have a cap of fox fur and a cap of lamb's wool.
If I do not wear the fox fur cap but the lamb's wool cap
I am just as happy.
I have a long sword and I have a short sword.
Whether I wear the long sword or the short sword in my belt,

[text continues on p. 569]

000 to the dogs and the vultures and you will be eternally damned." - "We do not know what happens after death. The ahun says one thing and the lama says something else. I can make a good living here now. If I return to China, I shall be able to enjoy meat only as ts'ai - as a supplementary dish - whereas here it has become a chief article of my diet. Besides, I have to pay good money for the little meat and flour I get in China, and obtain the money by working hard for it. Here I do not need any money," argued the pseudo-Mongol.

My servant Han accomplished nothing. The next morning the relationship between the two brothers was so strained that it seemed to me high time for them to part.

264 576 When the flour was finally ground and while I was taking my leave of the dsassak, I was invited to enter the reception room for a final drink of schnapps. A remarkably dark-skinned bondsman, a young Tibetan from the region south of Lhasa, entered with a stone-ware jug. He bent his right knee and bowed low before me, and with the ring finger of my right hand I had to touch a bit of butter that was stuck to the edge of the jug and to the stopper which consisted of a piece of wood. I had to smear a little of this butter on my forehead while the young chap held the thumb of his right hand against my forehead. After he had bowed before me, the young man made his bow in front of the dsassak, the wife of the dsassak, the lama (1) and finally in front of the small son, offering each of

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1. Geslong lamas from the Galdan lamasery near Lhasa are always sent to the banner leaders of the Dam Mongols for a period of three years to act as high priests, advisers and shepherds of souls, so to speak. Their chief duty is to lead the ceremony for the dead.

them in turn the closed ewer with the little ball of butter, whereupon each person took some of the butter with his ring-finger and murmured some prayers. Only after he had gone around the circle was the flask opened and some of its contents poured into a cup. Again, a piece of butter adhered to the cup and again the servant handed each one the cup and each person made a libation into all four directions with his fourth finger. Only after that was each person, with the exception of the lama, given some of the schnapps.

576 After that, in accordance with the custom of the country, I delivered a long panegyric on the hospitality of the dsassak who replied